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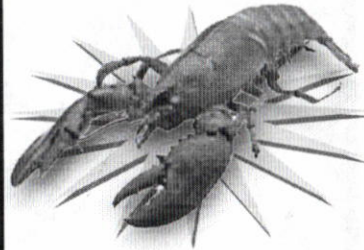
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photo by Boyacout

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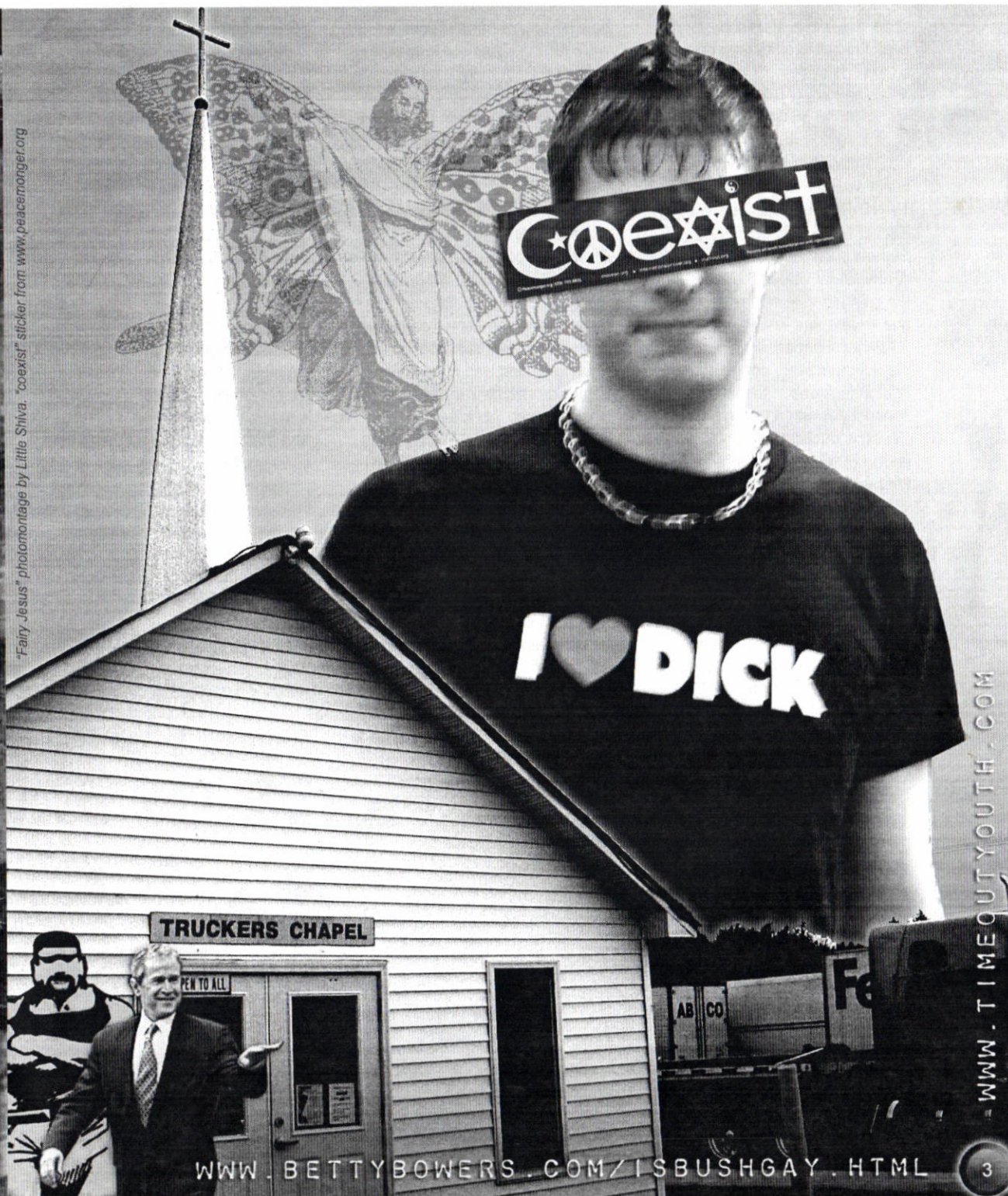
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Out In The South, eh?

Well, I'm out to all but my parents, so am I officially out? I mean, I've never had anyone to bring home, no reason to go "Mom?Dad? I'm queer!" And I had the usual dad-was-a-preacher (hell, the whole family was full of preachers) NO-TV-NO-ROCK-MUSIC upbringing. But I'm not feeling the David Sedaris slash Augusten Burroughs confessional vibe at the moment, so I'm going to veer off the assignment and write about FAERIES!

RADICAL Faeries. Alive here in the south. Indeed, concentrated right smack dab in the middle of Tennessee, with a few in Asheville. See, this publication is informative on the Burning Man scene, but I'm here to tell you there's a queer version,* with one of the main gatherings in the country taking place an hour outside of Nashville on a commune of sorts. The Radical Faeries are a subcultural group of, well, gay hippies, to OVERLY generalize. Faeries have self-given names, such as Dazzle, Pulse, By-The-Way, Kidder-What, River, Blue, and Ribbon. Ribbon explained to me

how he got his name: "Well, we were talking about the May pole at Spring Gathering, how the pole sticks into the hole in the ground, the whole man-woman thing, and we were like, 'where do the homos come in?' And I screamed, 'We're the ribbon!'"

I've been to two gatherings. The late summer music gathering, and the Beltane in spring, with the May pole ceremony. It's all about fags out in the woods camping and surviving on a diet of root vegetables and lovely fresh goat's milk, being naked or running around with three changes of fabulous outfits per day—not your standard drag, but creative outfits, as if there was a club in NYC to go to... The main outhouse is called the chapel: it seats four. And with all those fibrous meals, one learns rather quickly to get over any stage fright. Also, don't pee where you poo: it makes it smell worse. Bathing is in a mountain stream, under a solar shower, or in the wood heated bathhouse. A bonfire nightly hosts a drum circle, and dancing in the dirt; the time I was there, the sound board of a grand piano had been sacrificed to the flames. Cole Porter would be proud! If the drumming is too much, you go off to the semi-privacy of your tent and hear chatting and sex

going on all 'round you in the woods, not to mention the possible primal scream one girl let out one foggy morning! It's such a safe, sacred place, free. Indeed, free: my outfits were just dark kilts and skirts found at thrift stores. My faerie garb I keep rather monastic, letting Star (from Greensboro) parade diva essence in his flamboyant creations. People come from as far as New York City (Hedwig was there, and the Scissor Sisters!) and California to these things. A journey right into the bible-belt south. But it goes to show that it's not about physical location, but spiritual, and all that... And that's enough about the faeries, as we do like to be only seen in whisps and clouds.

I hope my parents don't pick up this rag, as then I would be out in the south, and I always wanted to be out in the north, but I'm still here, sort of used to it all.

—JASON KINNEY
a.k.a. pimperl pinstripe
www.radfae.org
www.planetida.com

Editrix's note: Burning Man is full of faeries and other assorted queers; the regional bum near Asheville, Transformus, has a Radical Faerie camp as well.

big head self portrait by Jason Kinney, nature photo by Mark Searcy with sheep by Jim Nicholson

quick and dirty shower girls by Tom Davidson krud montage by Little Shiva



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Jason Kinney

ART & CULTURE SYNTHESIS

Welcome Japanese Artist in Residence,
Junko Kawashima to Charlotte!
Junko is visiting the United States for the first time.
You are cordially invited to join us for a reception
and an experiment in art as communication.

THE EVENT

EMPATHINC. in association with Artists Without Boundaries
presents a reception, discussion, and a live drawing
collaboration between Japanese artist Junko Kawashima and
US artist (and gallery owner) Tom Schulz. Note: There will
be NO verbal communication at all (neither artist speaks the
other's language) so ALL communication will be done via
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Junko Kawashima

Date/Time
This Friday, October 7, 2005
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Location
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507 E. 36th Street - Charlotte, NC
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www.empathinc.com

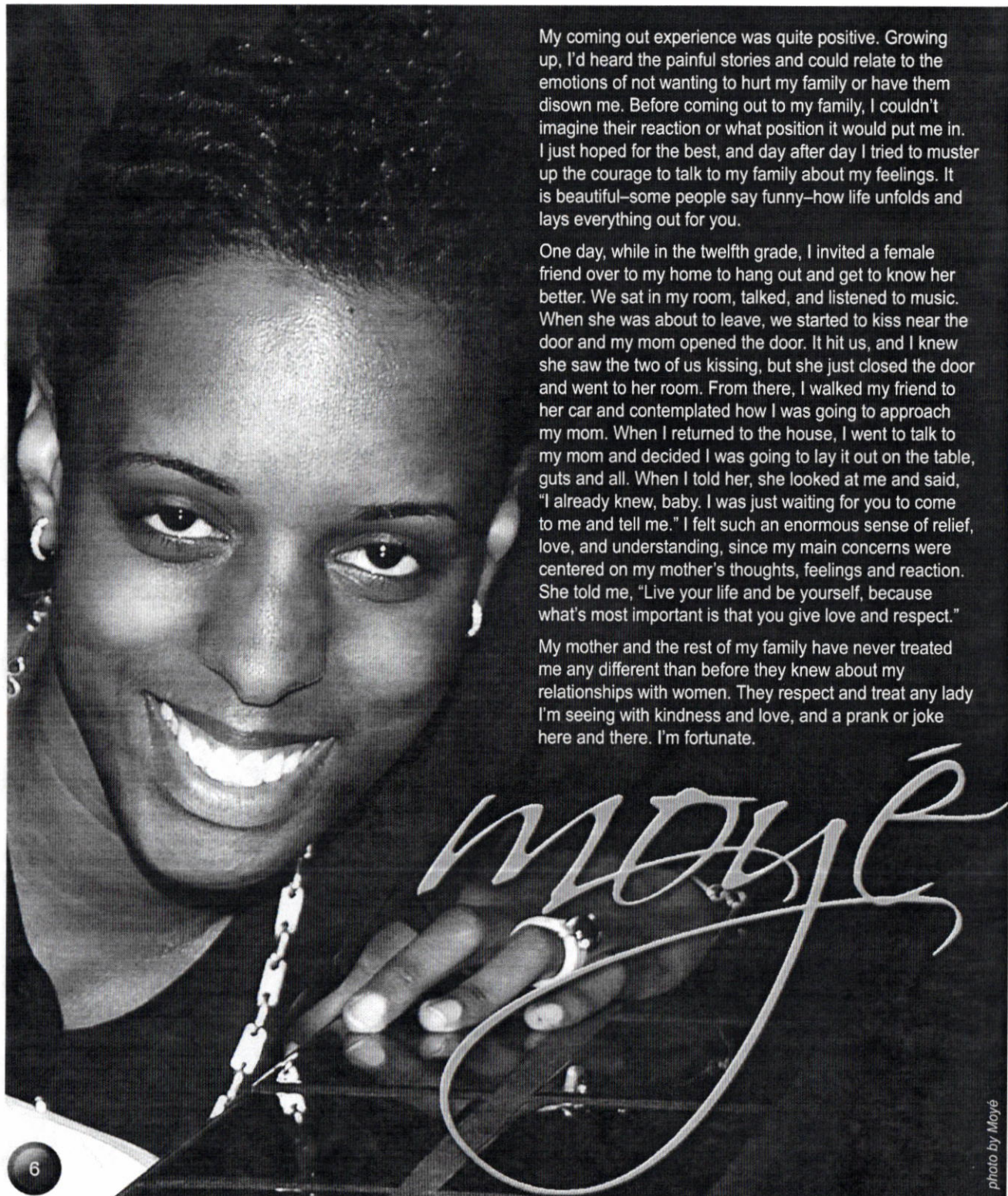
www.junkokawashima.com

JENN

0+>

Coming out in the south was a fairly
painless experience for me, easier
than coming out as a non-Christian
amidst this omnipotent concentration of
southern hypocrites extolling the virtues
of donating 10% of your paycheck to
purchase fleets of church Mercedes Benzes.
**I had a much more difficult
time coming out to my family.**

I had to explain to them the definition of a
transsexual on top of confessing that I was
one. In a strange irony, the bible-thumping and
probably closet G, L, B or T Christians are more
accepting of us sexual minorities than my old
blessed northwestern people. Those gun-totin',
hound in the back of their beat-up truck, trailer-
livin' Oregonians would rather see a slimy politician
than a gay person. You might as well order two
plots in the local cemetery before walking hand
in hand as a same-sex couple down the street of
some one-stoplight northwestern town. Those towns,
where the flea-infested dogs outnumber the women,
shun people who aren't devout members of the NRA.
One thing that really irritates me about the south is
that most religious organizations exclude my fellow
members of the Gay BLT. We need a multitude of gay
religious gatherings in the south: a church full of trannies
in their best Sunday dresses would be a sight to behold.
A group of lesbians at the local coffee shop on an after-
church Sunday afternoon would bring new meaning to the
definition of sisters. Although coming out in San Francisco
would be friendlier than a Christian potluck, being openly
gay, lesbian, bisexual or transsexual in confederate territory
is slightly safer than it is the northwestern land of skinheads
and Middle Eastern cults.



My coming out experience was quite positive. Growing up, I'd heard the painful stories and could relate to the emotions of not wanting to hurt my family or have them disown me. Before coming out to my family, I couldn't imagine their reaction or what position it would put me in. I just hoped for the best, and day after day I tried to muster up the courage to talk to my family about my feelings. It is beautiful—some people say funny—how life unfolds and lays everything out for you.

One day, while in the twelfth grade, I invited a female friend over to my home to hang out and get to know her better. We sat in my room, talked, and listened to music. When she was about to leave, we started to kiss near the door and my mom opened the door. It hit us, and I knew she saw the two of us kissing, but she just closed the door and went to her room. From there, I walked my friend to her car and contemplated how I was going to approach my mom. When I returned to the house, I went to talk to my mom and decided I was going to lay it out on the table, guts and all. When I told her, she looked at me and said, "I already knew, baby. I was just waiting for you to come to me and tell me." I felt such an enormous sense of relief, love, and understanding, since my main concerns were centered on my mother's thoughts, feelings and reaction. She told me, "Live your life and be yourself, because what's most important is that you give love and respect."

My mother and the rest of my family have never treated me any different than before they knew about my relationships with women. They respect and treat any lady I'm seeing with kindness and love, and a prank or joke here and there. I'm fortunate.

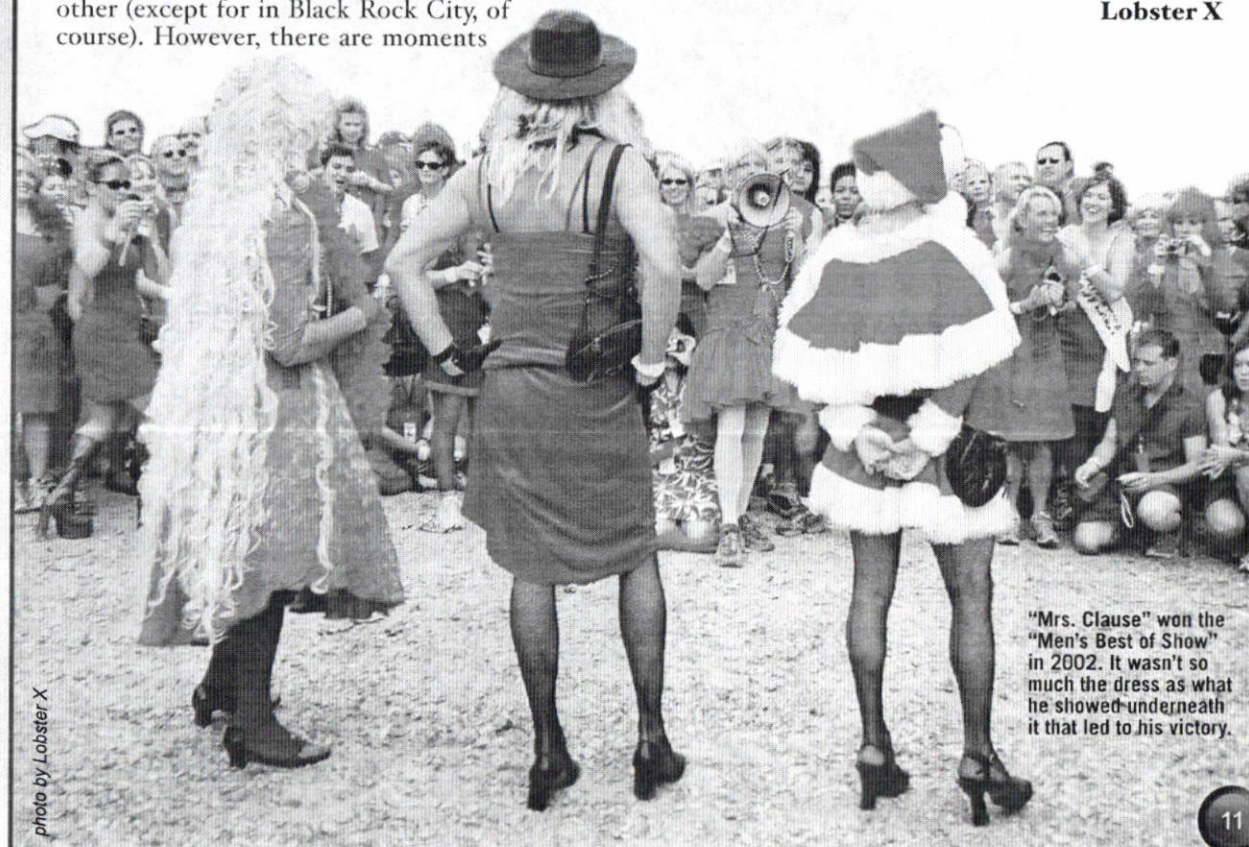
photo by Moyé

RED DRESSES IN PUBLIC

Last month I told you a little bit about Charlotte's Inaugural Little Black Dress Pub Crawl. This month, I would like to expand on the "Hash" culture of wearing dresses. Many hash groups, or "kennels," around the world have an annual Red Dress Hash to build membership and bring together semi-retired as well as out of town hashers to their city. In fact, last week, Washington D.C. Hashers hosted their 12th annual Red Dress Hash. You've really got to attend one of these in a city near you. Imagine if you will, 500 people (men and women) in red dresses running through the streets of D.C. This is an absolutely hysterical event. To see all of the grown men in petticoats, strapless or spaghetti strings, fishnet hose, high heels and purses is an event of a lifetime. (Pictured below is the Men's Best in Show Competition from 2002) It almost becomes a drag show like no other. Of course most of the men (and women) that come to these events are straight as a stick, with a few exceptions of gay or bi culture mixed in. But the tolerance here is like no other (except for in Black Rock City, of course). However, there are moments

when your typical ignorant, God-fearing, booger-eating redneck drives past a few men in tights and screams "Faggot!" at the top of his lungs. But when his dumb ass realizes that there are two to three dozen brawny runners within the group, he usually will punch the accelerator on his rusted pick up, spew smoke from his rusted tailpipe, and get the hell out of the way. But most people will stand on the sidewalk or hang around some park and cheer for the hashers as they run through the streets. I've even seen people set up lounge chairs and serve wine and crackers just to catch a glimpse of the hashers run past their house. Red Dress Hashes are really a means for men to get in touch with their feminine side and appreciate the "slave to fashion" mentality some women carry with them. Often times the men will go all out, and out-dress the women of the group. I suppose they do this for attention...or at least that's why I do it. So, if you see a bunch of folks running around your town in red dresses, just hold up your cup and cheer them on. On-on.

Lobster X



"Mrs. Clause" won the "Men's Best of Show" in 2002. It wasn't so much the dress as what he showed underneath it that led to his victory.

photo by Lobster X



montage by Little Shiva

She's so famous and busy getting equality laws on the books down in the Tampa Bay area she didn't have time to write for QZ. But you can read her amazing story of coming out in the south (well, does Florida count?) by visiting those long, klunky-ass news linx at the bottom of the page.

48 HOURS INVESTIGATES Becoming Jennifer Edwards

Feb. 25, 2004



For years, Ed Kozlowski, now Jennifer Edwards, was hiding a long-kept secret that was causing him great pain: his desire to become a woman. (CBS)

PREVIOUS IMAGE NEXT IMAGE

QUOTE

"It was very important to me. I agonized over it. It was a big relief to be able to finally be myself."
Jennifer Edwards

(CBS) To Allison Helsel, stepfather was always a dad. Ed Kozlowski was attentive, and he raised his own.

But Allison, 23, says she didn't know that her fun-loving father, a computer programmer who loved motorcycles, had a long-kept secret that was causing him great pain. Correspondent Troy Roberts reports.

"We were always happy," recalls Allison. "I could never see any kind of depression or..."

So it was quite a shock a year ago, Kozlowski, phoned his stepdaughter that he had always been a "she."

"It was a conscious decision to make every day..."

If you're ever in Gulfport, Florida (a.k.a. Dykeport), go to Kool Beanz coffee shop, grab a QZ, and ask 'em to give Jennifer a call: maybe she'll come say hi. Oh, and did I mention she's one of the key organizers of Tampa's huge gay pride celebration? This year it was damn near as big as Burning Man. Go, girl!

www.cbsnews.com/stories/2004/02/23/48hours/main601800.shtml
www.sptimes.com/2005/02/25/Floridian/ln_midlife_a_rebirth.shtml
www.sptimes.com/2005/02/25/Floridian/The_price_and_the_pai.shtml
www.sptimes.com/2003/06/08/Norpinellas/Being_true_to_herself.shtml

www.laserlovers.com/my_pics.htm

It's been a long time

since I was on the precipice of my sexual orientation discovery trail. Today, I'm quite comfortable in my own skin, but that's now. Many yesterdays ago, it simply wasn't so.

I grew up in a small mountain town. Those hills sheltered me from the outside world, and even from myself. All that changed when I went off to college.

During my college years in the late '60s, early '70s, I became quite active in the women's rights movement. Me and so many of my "sisters" cast off our bras, burned them and swore allegiance to defending the civil liberties of women everywhere. It was during that time that I began the process of becoming me rather than an extension of my parents.

After I completed my degree, I began my career. That's when I met Billy.

Billy was a friend of a hetro couple with whom I had been spending much of my time. Candy and Jim became like mother hens, always keeping me under their wing, making sure that I had a date, someplace to hang out. Then Billy came to visit. We began to date and I fell for him. In the end, our relationship imploded. He wasn't loyal and starting sneaking around, sleeping with other women. I caught him. He was apologetic. We continued. Then he made a big mistake: he slept with one of my former college roommates. She and I had parted ways due to her lack of character and trustworthiness. I never wanted to see her again.

Billy and I had a party at the posh home he was renting with a friend. His brother, Don, was in from an ashram. Instantly we connected. He became my confidant and my ally. Don was also gay.

When Billy failed to show up for a date, Don and I tracked him down at Judy's place. Billy wasn't going to wiggle out of this one: he had crossed a huge line.

Don and I became fast friends. We did everything together. Don took me to my first gay bar. I was nervous. Eugenia,

dressed in a man's suit, approached me for a dance. I was terrified. I asked Don to take me home. That was the spark that sent my mind wondering.

After a harrowing trip to a psychiatrist, I finally divulged to Don, "I think I like women." He said, "Sure! I knew that." We went back to the gay bar and the rest was herstory.

One November evening in 1974 I met Janet. We began to date and finally moved in together. My parents were still trying to work the marionette strings, especially my daddy. When I refused to divulge what I was doing with my life to him, he threatened to "come down and yank me out of there" to live in my hometown for the rest of my life. Geez! I was 23. I was too old to live with my parents and I was in a relationship.

I knew my father meant business, so I hired an attorney. During those days I often found my friends being institutionalized for the "cure." I knew my parents would try the same thing with me. Thus, the attorney instructed me to have Janet call him immediately if I was taken into custody. He'd get a writ to get me out. That was a scary time. **My friends who had been locked up were not quite the same once they were released. Some had undergone shock therapy, others were hypnotized, others simply abused by the clinical system, more made to feel shame.** I'm sure some of them eventually committed suicide; I moved away a bit after that time and lost contact with many of them.

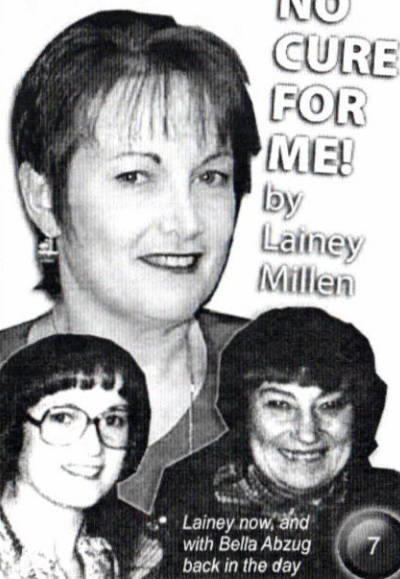
Janet and I became members of the Sexuality and Lesbian Task Force of the National Organization for Women. We supported the programming and helped out in every way we could. We even provided security for the politicians in attendance at a Democratic Mid-Winter meeting. Our favorite moment was meeting Bella Abzug, hat and all! Walter Mondale was there too, as well as other

noted Democrats.

Before we moved from that city to Charlotte, we ventured down to northern Mississippi to a state park for a S<F picnic. We were having a great time with our friends when the rednecks decided to challenge us. We got into heated discussions and debated with them. They simply could not understand why we did what we did—sleep with women. We asked them why they did. That finally shut them up. However, this didn't make us feel more secure. We were in their territory and we were a little scared. We pictured the headlines: *Women murdered in state park due to lesbianism!* After five hours, we just left; it was an education for us all. Even the rednecks had an opportunity to grow outside their limited boundaries.

Janet and I split in 1998 after a 23-year sojourn. I'm single, dating men and women now and have accepted my bisexuality, but not without much anguish. It took a lot of processing to get my mind wrapped around it, to feel OK. But that's another story for another time.

Lainey Millen is the graphic designer and a special assignments writer for Q-Notes. She also served on the steering committee for the formation of both the Charlotte and Memphis G/L switchboards.



Lainey now, and with Bella Abzug back in the day

NO CURE FOR ME!
by Lainey Millen

evolution of a Mistress

by Mistress LunaSea



My coming out was slow but dramatic. I knew I was attracted to females from a very young age, probably around five. I would sneak peeks at my dad's girly magazines and cut pictures of women in their bras and panties out of the Sears catalogue.

I would take the pictures to school and tease the boys with them. I was always getting gifts from boys and never had an interest in them except to tease and deny

them anything happening with me. I had a sexual encounter at a young age with my female teen cousin where we pretended to be married. Her idea. We also played strippers together. There was another encounter with a teen girl not long after this. I didn't usually have girls for friends because

I was afraid to get too close with them. My thoughts on boys were that they should be collected like charms on a bracelet. In my mind, females were always the superior gender and men should be used and abused like they had done to women throughout the centuries. I don't completely feel that way now: men just need to be kept in their place.

During all my grade school and teen years I had plenty of boyfriends, but very few girls for friends. I ended up getting engaged at seventeen to my best friend in high school. I had three

boyfriends at the time, and they were all shocked to find out that it was my best friend I was marrying. His family was very wealthy, and my home life was horrible. We both felt like black sheep and could relate to not fitting in anywhere. I married him at eighteen. I wasn't in love nor pregnant but he was good to me and his family was rich, so I would be taken care of. I hoped I'd fall in love with him one day, but it never happened. Sex was a chore and I didn't bother with birth control since we rarely had sex. I did have two boys with him when I felt the time was right to be a mom. We seemed like the perfect Christian family. God was our entire life, 24/7. I was very lonely, even though it seemed like I had it all.

I left my husband at twenty-seven for a woman two years younger than me who was staying at our house until she got on her feet. She had moved to Charlotte with my cousin. They were best friends, but she and I became involved with each other after much thought and many late night conversations. I decided to take my boys and move into an apartment with her. Not long after, she left me from the guilt over my so-called perfect Christian family breaking up. She thought I'd go back to my husband if she got out of the picture. It was a ten month affair that changed my life forever. I couldn't go back to the life that I had. Suffocation was an emotional and physical feeling that came over me being in a family environment. I felt like I'd discovered the real me and no matter what, I wouldn't live straight or married. I outgrew the life I had and was ready to move on. I had never been single and

was ready to be independent. My ex fought hard and hung on a long time. The boys stayed with him while I tried to get on my feet. I couldn't put them through sleeping on the floor in my new apartment or wondering if I could afford to eat and pay my bills. I never had a checking account, credit or a car when I was married. Life was very hard and I could've gone back at any time, but it wouldn't have been fair to me or him. I wasn't in love or sexually interested in him, and that was the feeling I had the entire time we were married. He did know about the lack of anything romantic between us because it was an ongoing discussion. I hate that he got hurt. And if I could take that part away, I certainly would. It made him crazy that I wouldn't come back. His mental and physical health declined: he blamed me for that. I lost every friend and family member when I decided to live as a lesbian. I had nothing, no one. It was a long, hard road, and meeting people I could relate to was a nightmare as well as dangerous. I got introduced to going to Scorpios where I made friends and eventually met my girlfriend of sixteen years.

I've been a kinky person all my life, and dominant in every relationship that I've ever had. I learned that it was a lifestyle in 1999 when I went to a BDSM workshop done at a gay community event, and have embraced it ever since. My partner wasn't interested in pursuing my interests in the lifestyle or growing and improving, so I ended the relationship and moved on with my life. I'm currently happily single, not dating, with one full-time male submissive named Boyscout. I do fetish performance art and domination sessions and am a promoter of artists for my group, <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/funfreakypeople>.

I have an Ebay store and Boyscout is working on a few websites for me. His best is my website for my Mistress business: www.mistresslunasea.com/ I will do non-sexual Pro Domme sessions of role/fantasy play if I'm comfortable with the person. I love the power exchange that I get from domination. I consider myself a healer and nurturer. I'm a philanthropist and try to help people if I can. I do several fund raisers a year for good causes and have been volunteering since 1999 for the sick and homeless. I am not religious, but spiritual.

Coming in the January issue of Maxim magazine: *My Mother the Dominatrix*, featuring Mistress LunaSea

